

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Office Action mailed March 1, 2006. Claims 1-7 remain pending in the application prior to this amendment and stand rejected. Claims 1, 4 and 6 have been amended herein, and new claims 8 and 9 have been added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner, Robert R. Raevis, for the telephone interview with Applicant's representative, David W. Dorton, on March 20, 2006. During the interview, claims 1, 4 and 6 were discussed with respect to the references of record. The Examiner indicated that the deletion of "annular" in claims 1, 4 and 6 would overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112. The Examiner also indicated that independent claims 4 and 6 are only rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 and that amendments to these claims to correct the informality would place the claims in condition for allowance. The Examiner suggested that amending claim 1 to recite the structure of a pressure relief valve to be tested by the claimed apparatus enable such structure to be given consideration in view of the references of record. Claims 1, 4 and 6 have been amended herein in accordance with the interview. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, with regard to informalities associated with the claim language. Claims 1, 4 and 6 have been amended herein to delete "annular" from these claims. The specification has also been amended to delete this word, as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that rejections of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Based on U.S. Patent No. 2,178,901 to Webster

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Webster '901. Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Webster '901. Claim 1 is the only independent claim of this rejected group and has been amended herein to positively recite the structure of the pressure relief valve within the body of the claim, as suggested by the Examiner. Applicant asserts that amended claim 1 is not taught or suggested by Webster '901 because Webster '901 fails to teach or suggest the claimed structure, namely "a pressure relief valve received in said cavity, said pressure relief valve comprising a sleeve having a passage therein, a valve spool within said passage, and a spring within said passage and cooperating with said valve spool to limit flow through said passage," as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1-3 based on Webster '901 be withdrawn.

New Claims

New claims 8 and 9 have been added by this amendment. Claim 8 is directed to an apparatus for testing hydraulic pressure relief valves comprising:

a body constructed to withstand high pressure;

a cavity formed into said body and configured to completely enclose a pressure relief valve therein, said cavity including a valve seat and an aperture through which the pressure relief valve may be received into said cavity to contact said valve seat;

a closure sealingly couplable to said body, proximate said aperture, to sealably secure the pressure relief

valve within said cavity;

at least one fluid inlet communicating with said cavity and admitting fluid into said cavity in a direction to seat the pressure relief valve against said valve seat;

a fluid outlet in communication with said cavity, said valve seat disposed between said fluid inlet and said fluid outlet; and

a pressure gauge in communication with said cavity and indicating a fluid pressure at which the pressure relief valve actuates to pass fluid from said fluid inlet to said fluid outlet.

Claim 9 depends from claim 8 and further recites a biasing member associated with said closure and configured to bias the pressure relief valve against said valve seat. Support for new claims 8 and 9 can be found in the application at page 5, line 23- page 9, line 12, and with reference to the figures. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by new claims 8 and 9.

Applicant asserts that claims 8 and 9 are not taught or suggested by the references of record. Specifically, Webster '901 does not teach or suggest:

at least one fluid inlet communicating with said cavity and admitting fluid into said cavity in a direction to seat the pressure relief valve against said valve seat;

a fluid outlet in communication with said cavity, said valve seat disposed between said fluid inlet and said fluid outlet; and

a pressure gauge in communication with said cavity and indicating a fluid pressure at which the pressure relief valve actuates to pass fluid from said fluid inlet to said fluid outlet.

Rather, Webster '901 is directed to a pressure relief valve assembly having a valve 15 that is normally pressed against seat 16 by a coil spring 17, and having a check valve 24 that closes chamber 23 from supply line 12 to enable relief valve 15 to be pressure tested. (See Webster '901 at page 1, col. 1, line 50-col. 2, line 30.) When pressurized fluid is admitted through inlet 12, both check valve 24 and relief 15 are displaced in directions away from their respective valve seats. During test, pressurized fluid is admitted through nipple 29 into chamber 23, whereby check valve 24 is urged against its valve seat 25 and relief valve 15 is urged in a direction away from its valve seat 16. Accordingly, Webster '901 does not teach or suggest a fluid inlet communicating with a cavity and admitting fluid into the cavity in a direction to seat a pressure relief valve against its valve seat, and having a pressure gauge in communication with the cavity that indicates a fluid pressure at which the pressure relief valve actuates to pass fluid from the fluid inlet to the fluid outlet, as required by claims 8 and 9. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests early and favorable indication of allowance with respect to new claims 8 and 9.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments to the claims and the remarks set forth herein, Applicant believes this case is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes any issue requires further discussion, the Examiner is respectfully asked to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the matter may be promptly resolved. The Examiner's prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Applicant does not believe any other fees are due in connection with filing this response other than the additional independent claim fee. However, if any fees are necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment or fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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